

Remarks

Claims 1-34 are pending in the subject application. Applicant notes that claims 1-3, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 14-31 have been allowed. Accordingly, claim 6 as amended herein, the allowed claims, and claims 4, 5, and 9, as previously amended, and previously presented new claims 32-34 submitted in the response filed June 13, 2003 are under consideration.

Claim 6 is amended herein to address the Examiner's comments as set forth in the Office Action. Of note, although the Examiner has indicated that the present Office Action is a reply to a response filed July 11, 2003, Applicant assumes that the Examiner is referring to the Response filed on June 13, 2003, since that was the last Response filed. The Examiner has indicated in the instant Office Action that the marked up version of claim 6 presented in the Response filed on June 13, 2003 did not reflect all of the added text. This inconsistency was due to a clerical error and Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for providing the opportunity to correct this mistake. Accordingly, the amendment to claim 6 as presented herein rectifies this clerical error. As indicated in the Response filed June 13, 2003, support for the amendment to claim 6 is found in original claim 6 and paragraph 0040. No issue of new matter is introduced by this amendment.

The Examiner has also indicated that a new version of claim 8 is required as a result of its inadvertent cancellation following renumbering of the original claims. The Examiner has indicated that the inadvertent cancellation resulted from the Response filed December 23, 2003. Applicant assumes that the Examiner is actually referring to the Response filed on December 18, 2003. Applicant is, however, uncertain of the Examiner's comments in this regard since the Examiner renumbered originally filed claims 8, 9, and 10 to become claims 7, 8, and 9 in the Office Action dated March 13, 2003. Moreover, Applicant has not cancelled either present claim 7 (originally filed claim 8 and renumbered as claim 7) or present claim 8 (originally filed claim 9) in any Response filed. Accordingly, it is not apparent to Applicant that either present claim 8 or originally filed claim 8 (now present claim 7) has been cancelled during the prosecution of this application.

In order to be fully responsive to the Examiner's comments, however, Applicant herein provides a comprehensive set of the pending claims. The numbering of the claim set reflects

Applicant's understanding of the Examiner's renumbering of the claims under Rule 1.126. In accordance with the renumbering of the claims, dependencies cited therein have also been changed to reflect the revised numerical designations of the claims. The comprehensive set includes the version of present claim 8, which was originally filed as claim 9, and amended in Applicant's Response dated December 18, 2002. No issue of new matter is introduced by the comprehensive set of claims, which includes, as requested, a version of present claim 8.

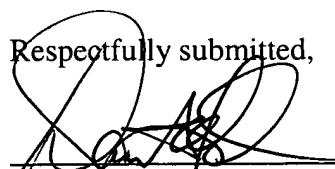
Fees

No additional fees are believed to be necessitated by the instant response. However, should this be in error, authorization is hereby given to charge Deposit Account no. 11-1153 for any underpayment, or to credit any overpayments.

Conclusion

Applicant submits that the claims as amended and presented are in condition for allowance, and accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding grounds of rejection, and early allowance of the claims as amended is believed to be in order and is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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